RG56 Entry 289 Box 4

16. Filed Apr 18 1839

Mr. Lafferty's Statement

Thomas Slidell Esq.

Commissioner

RG56 Entry 289 Box 4

Norwhay July 4th 1839.

Thomas Slidell Esq.
Commissioner,
Sir

In conformity with your intimation of last evening, that I should state in writing the reasons why the Books were not properly brought up during my Clerkship at the New Orleans Branch Mint, I submit the following –

1st At the opening of the Mint, the Clerk having no knowledge of Mint transactions, and being notified that Mr Maxwell was an Officer possessing the necessary qualifications for this business, and that the utmost confidence and belief was to be placed in his assertions, he was consulted as to the manner of carrying on the operations of this institution, and of opening the Books – Mr Lovel who was then Clerk could, as I believe, obtain no satisfactory information ~~as Mr Lovel informed me~~ except from Mr. Smith, but this I do not know of my own knowledge.

2d When Bullion was deposited for Coinage, it was first weighed, then sent to the Melter & Refiner for Melting, and afterwards reweighed, an assay piece was ~~taken off~~ sometimes taken off immediately; after which the Melter & Refiner used to take the Bullion into his Vault & sometimes he kept it in his Vault several days before he called to have it assayed, and had consequently actual possession of it without giving the Treasurer any voucher wherewith to prove that said Bullion had been transferred to him.

The Instructions were received about the middle of June 1838 - Mr Ewell who up to that time, was still the Treasury Clerk and had charge of the Books, was sickly, and continued in bad health, until he was compelled to leave the Mint - The Books consequently were not opened. I told Mr Bradford however that I would open the Books as soon as they left - upon their leaving the City, which was on the first August 1838, I opened the Books - when I came to the latter part of July, I found that Mr Maxwell had received a Warrant dated 31st July 1838 for Silver Bullion returned to the Treasurer for a much larger amount than had been received at the Mint up to that time - The Bullion returned was weighed by Mr Lillie, the Weigh Master (Mr Lillie had been appointed through the particular recommendation of Mr Maxwell) in the presence of the Treasurer & Melter & Refiner. This warrant was for 209. 799 57/100 ounces whilst the whole amount of Silver Bullion received at the Mint at that time was only 183. 052 19/100 ounces. On perceiving that the accounts could not agree, I told the Superintendent, that I could proceed no further - On the return of Messrs Tyler & Maxwell to this City, Mr Bradford said he would have the Bullion weighed in the presence of the Treasurer, Clerk & Melter & Refiner & himself, Mr Bradford called on those Gentlemen to do it, but he never could get them together in the office & manifested the greatest anxiety in consequence - The law requiring an annual settlement at the close of the year, I told Mr Bradford

that it would be the time to have the Bullion weighed, & removed from the Melter & Refiner's Vault & delivered to the proper officers - they stated to him that they had not time, that it could not be done without stopping the operations of the Mint, & that such a course would be very injurious -

I left the Mint on the 8th of January last without ever having been able to settle the accounts of Treasurer with Coiner ~~& Melter & R~~ and with Melter & Refiner -

These are the reasons why the Books were not brought up at the time I left

I am Very Respectfully
Yr
Ob Servant
Emile La Sere